

# Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

## Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

### 2007 DROUGHT AND BURN BAN SITUATION REPORT # 1 25 October 2007, 1600 Hours

#### SUMMARY

Statewide precipitation for the previous water year (1 October 2006 through 30 September 2007) was below normal. Drought conditions have intensified over the Commonwealth during the last month due to an extended period of record high temperatures accompanied by almost a total absence of rainfall. Exceptional drought conditions persist in portions of southwest Virginia. The current drought conditions have created the potential for widespread and very dangerous forest fires throughout the Commonwealth.

#### EXECUTIVE ACTION

**EOC Activation:** The Virginia Emergency Operations Center is at Routine condition and is operating with normal staff.

**State of Emergency:** Governor Timothy M. Kaine declared a Statewide Emergency on 18 October 2007 and imposed a statewide ban on all open burning effective immediately. The Governor specifically authorized the immediate placement of Virginia National Guard assets for deployment to assist the Virginia Department of Forestry, upon its request, in fighting and mitigating the effects of fires and directed State Agencies provide assistance in dealing with potential or actual drought related issues.

Governor Kaine requested that the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture declare Virginia a statewide disaster area due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures in 2007 on 1 October 2007. The Acting US Secretary of Agriculture designated 78 additional counties and 34 independent cities as primary natural disaster areas on 18 October 2007 due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures that occurred from January 1, 2007, and continuing. Previously, 15 counties had been declared primary natural disaster areas.

**Executive Order:** [Executive Order 57 \(2007\)](#)

#### WEATHER FORECAST

**Thursday, 25 Oct:** Occasional rain; high temperatures will range mid 50's to mid 60's; variable winds 10 to 15 MPH; 40 to 50 percent chance of precipitation in southwest VA and 90 to 100 percent for the rest of the Commonwealth. **Thursday night:** Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of precipitation in southwest VA and a 90 to 100 percent chance of rain for the rest of the Commonwealth; low temperatures will range upper 40's to upper 50's; variable winds 5 to 15 MPH.

**Friday, 26 Oct:** Cloudy with a 50 percent chance of precipitation in southwest VA and 90 percent chance for the rest of the Commonwealth; high temperatures will range low to upper 60's; variable winds 5 to 15 MPH. **Friday night:** Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of precipitation in southwest VA and 70 percent for the rest of the Commonwealth; low temperatures will range upper 40's to low 60's; variable winds 5 to 10 MPH.

#### OPERATIONS SECTION

**ESF 5 – Emergency Management:** Event created in WebEOC, 2007-10 Drought and Burn Ban; Participating as member of the Drought Monitoring Task Force; monitoring weather, river flow and precipitation reports; coordinating conference calls; assessing the impact across the Commonwealth

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**State Warning Point:** Normal operations

**Local Liaison:** VDEM Regional Coordinators polling localities reference drought impacts. VDEM Region Four Coordinator in contact with Wise County and Town of Appalachia reference water supply issue.

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES BRANCH**

**ESF 4 – Firefighting:** VA Department of Forestry reports soil and fuel moisture readings at historically low levels in some parts of the Commonwealth and anticipate an exceptionally severe fall wildfire season (15 October – 30 November). VA Forestry officials met with federal and state Forestry officials from Kentucky and Tennessee to discuss and plan for the fall wildfire season and VA Department of Forestry has developed a plan of action. In addition to the statewide burn ban, 21 counties and 2 cities have enacted local burn bans/restrictions. [Local Burn Bans/Restrictions](#).

**ESF 8 – Public Health & Medical Services:** Virginia Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water met with the Town of Appalachia Town Manager and Town Engineer on 23 October to discuss options to maintain water service to customers of the town waterworks. The following two options were discussed:

1. Pump water from the Powell River to the Appalachia reservoir; this was done several years ago during a water shortage, but the infrastructure installed at that time is gone. Town Engineer will work with VA Department of Environmental Quality to obtain an emergency withdrawal permit and attempt to determine how long the Powell River will remain a viable source
2. Pursue utilizing the Osaka wells; previously used as emergency source, but are aesthetically unpleasing. Water is high in iron, manganese and hydrogen sulfide concentrations

Virginia Department of Health and Office of Drinking Water continue to monitor and stand by for consultation and coordination.

### **HUMAN SERVICES BRANCH**

**ESF 11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) reported that all counties and independent cities in the Commonwealth have been designated primary disaster areas with the exception of the counties of Arlington and York and the independent cities of Alexandria, Bristol, Falls Church, Norton and Poquoson. These localities have been designated contiguous disaster areas. All Virginia localities have access to federal drought disaster assistance. VDACS launched a new drought Web page to provide farmers with up-to-date information. [VDACS Drought Related Information](#). The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries reports that the significant deterioration in stream flows across the State have resulted in reduced recreational opportunities. Boating opportunities are very limited on nearly all rivers and streams. The fall trout stocking schedule has been significantly curtailed due to low water conditions in western Virginia. On 13 October the Department issued a ban on all open burning on wildlife management areas.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT BRANCH**

**ESF 3 – Public Works & Engineering:** The Virginia Department of Health has not reported any impacts to public water supplies that have compromised their ability to provide the needs of their customers; 32 systems have initiated voluntary water conservation requirements and 23 systems have initiated mandatory water conservation requirements. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality chairs the Drought Monitoring Task Force and issues a monthly report. The drought is beginning to cause major concern in the management of our large reservoirs. Fortunately, the majority of declines occurred late in the summer and early fall so recreation

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was not severely impacted. Focus is shifting toward making sure the large reservoirs return to their normal levels by the spring of 2008. [Drought Monitoring Task Force Report 22 Oct 07](#)

### **PLANNING SECTION**

**Situation/Documentation Unit:** Preparing and distributing weekly Situation Reports, monitoring WebEOC entries and maintaining situational awareness

**Mapping/GIS Unit:** Providing maps and graphics related to drought and burn ban.

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